

## Killer Clown from Underground by puggslugz

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**Summary:** The day after his creation, Brobot goes on a little adventure that leaves him without an arm. As Jimmy, Carl, and Sheen investigate, they come to find that something funny is going on. An Eldritch abomination, taking the form of a sewer clown named Pennywise, is terrorizing Retroville and causing their classmates to disappear. The three must face their greatest fears or die trying.

## Killer Clown from Underground

The terror, which would not end for another, I dunno, four or five days (if it *did* end), begins in the town of Retroville with a metal boy named Brobot and his human brother Jimmy Neutron. It is morning, and Jimmy wakes up, startled, to find Brobot standing attentively beside his bed, eager for some kind of adventure. Once Jimmy has woken up a bit and gotten out of bed, Jimmy and Brobot go downstairs. Brobot zips ahead while Jimmy trudges to the stairs.

The living room is gray and still, with light only coming in scantily through the windows, some of which have the shades pulled down. The only thing that can be heard at first is the pitter-patter of rain against the windows, until Brobot notices the rain and begins talking about how he thinks the rain is cool. Jimmy sits on the couch, bored, annoyed, and still sleepy. Brobot has been annoying Jimmy on-and-off since he was created yesterday, and all Jimmy wants right now is some peace and quiet.

"Brobot, *please!* Can you stop talking about the rain? The clouds precipitate at least once or twice a week," he tries to explain. He walks over to Brobot, puts his hand on his shoulder, and he tries to offer a solution for him. "You can get excited about it next time it rains. So just take it easy, okay? We'll have plenty of other things to do today."

Brobot doesn't understand. He wants to play in the rain. That'd be fun. "But Jimmy, we don't know when the next time will be!" Brobot puts his hands up to his mouth. "What if it doesn't rain ever again? We need to play with the rain *now!*"

Jimmy is tired and doesn't want to deal with Brobot's theatrics. "Brobot, I don't want to...hey, wait a minute," Jimmy says to himself. *But if he's out there, Jimmy thinks, then I can have some peace in here.* Then, he turns back to Brobot. "You know, you're right. You *should* go play in the rain!" Brobot lights up with joy.

"Really? Ohboyohboyohboy! I'm gonna play with the rain!" Brobot is spinning with joy.

Jimmy reaches for his Hypercube, opens the top, and from it pulls out a paper boat that bears the name *S. S. Neutron*, complete with Jimmy's logo printed on the sail. Jimmy holds it in front of Brobot. "What is that," Brobot says. "Is that a hat? I looove hats!"

"This isn't a hat, it's a paper boat made for adventure! You take it outside and sail it down the curbside. Then, the water carries it away, and you're off on an *adventure*!" Jimmy tells him. "Now, go put on a raincoat so you don't get wet. Don't want to get any rust spots."

Brobot bolts away for 5 seconds before coming back wearing a yellow raincoat. "I'm ready big brother!" He proceeds to snatch the boat out of Jimmy's hand, and Jimmy's eyes widen in surprise. "Now Brobot, just remember to—" Brobot doesn't let him finish as he dashes for the door, screaming "weeee" all the way. He pushes the front door wide open, cheering "Adventure!" as he makes his way down the street.

Brobot gently sets the *S. S. Neutron* down into a curbside stream, where it follows the current. Brobot chases it from above the curb. The colorful houses, which are faded by the falling rain, whish past him as he zooms along grass and concrete while dodging branches and avoiding mud puddles.

"Make way for captain Brobot!" The boat speeds downstream, and Brobot tries to go faster but has trouble keeping up. Suddenly, he trips over a protruding tree root. "Oooof, I made a fall!" He gets up and spots his paper boat floating away from him. "My boat!" He rolls faster and tries to catch up to his boat, but it's too late. The *S.S. Neutron* falls down a storm drain like a canoe over a waterfall. Brobot bends down to look into the drain. He sees nothing and fears his boat may be lost forever. "Jimmy's gonna be mad at me," he says to himself.

Just as he starts to get up, Brobot hears in a cheerful yet raspy voice (like that of a middle-aged man) from down below: "Hiya, Brobot!" Brobot bends back down to take another look inside the drain. In the drain, he is unable to clearly make out what the man he heard looks like. He can barely see big red hair surrounding a bald head, a frilly collar, white makeup, and a colorful smile. It's a clown! Brobot is speechless. The clown asks, "Wet enough for ya up there, is it?"

Brobot gasps and says, "A clown! I **love** clowns! Oooo do something fun!"

"How about I give you a balloon? Everybody loves a balloon," the clown explains. "Donchya wanna balloon, Brobot?"

Brobot gasps. "Of *course* I'd like a balloon, silly!" The clown holds up a yellow balloon for Brobot. Just as Brobot reaches for the balloon, he pauses and remembers Jimmy's advice from yesterday. "Uh, on second thought, my big brother told me not to take stuff from strangers. Sorry, Mr. clown!"

The clown agrees. "Very wise of your brother, Brobot. Very wise indeed!" The clown moves closer, allowing Brobot to see more details in his features. "I, Brobot, am Pennywise the Dancing Clown! And you...are Brobot...so now we know eachudda! Ceeeerrect?"

Brobot nods. "Correct!" He reaches for the balloon again but retracts his hand at the last second. "Actually, uh, I should probably go now. I need to get home to my brother and—"

"GO? Without...this?"

It's the *S.S. Neutron*! Brobot can barely contain his excitement. "MY BOAT! Gimme gimme gimme gimme! I want to make it float again!"

Pennywise utters in a deeper voice, "Oh...you'll float, Brobot. We **all float** down here."

Brobot, confused, asks, "Me? *Float*? But I'm made of metal! I can't float, silly!"

Pennywise rolls his eyes and shows the boat again. Brobot gets down on the soggy pavement to reach in, and just as he grabs it, Pennywise seizes his right arm. Brobot screams for help as Pennywise spontaneously grows sharp teeth and lunges at his arm.

Back at Jimmy's house, Carl and Sheen are over. Initially, they came over to hang out with Brobot, but now they are keeping Jimmy company. At first, Jimmy was enjoying his time away from Brobot, but now he begins to worry after so much time has passed. "I don't understand, Brobot should be back by now. How could playing with a

paper boat take so long?" Jimmy begins pacing back and forth.

Carl says, "Aw, don't worry Jimmy. Maybe he just chased the boat into a river and kept following it."

Sheen says, "Orr maybe...some kind of monster got him! Like a space lizard, or El Chupacabra! The horror! THE HORROR!"

"Sheeeen! There's no such thing as El Chupacabra," Jimmy says. "And Brobot wasn't attacked by anything, I can assure you." He pauses for a moment. "\*gulp\* *I hope.*"

Just then, Brobot comes in through the front door as lightning and thunder clash. "Jimmy," he screams, "I'm scared!" His arm is missing, the raincoat sleeve ripped just above the metal wound.

Carl mumbles to himself in shock. Jimmy is speechless. Sheen freaks out and says, "OH MY GOSH! IT'S HORRIBLE! SOME MONSTER ATE BROBOT'S LEGS!"

"Sheen," Jimmy says, "Brobot never had legs. It's his arm that's been eaten."

"Ohhh....SOME MONSTER ATE BROBOT'S ARM!"

"Sheen, relax, I'm sure it wasn't a monster," Jimmy assures him.

Brobot intervenes. "It wasn't a monster! It was a clown! A really funny, but weird, clown! He didn't even give me back my boat like he promised!"

All three of the boys simultaneously say "A clown?"

"Uh-huh! He was down in the sewer," Brobot says.

Jimmy is confused. "But there's no way a clown could have ripped off your arm! You're made of titanium and steel!"

"I don't know about this, Jimmy. I'm scared!" Brobot trembles in fear.

"Did the neighbors see what happened? Did anybody come to help you," Jimmy asks.

"No, Jimmy. I was all alone...and scared. Nobody came to help," Brobot tells him.

"That's crazy...but don't worry!" He walks over to Brobot. "Relax. We'll go to my lab and fix you up fast. And then we'll hook you up to the computer to check your internal memory so we can find out what *really* happened."

Brobot waves his left arm and the stump of his right arm in the air with joy.

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In the lab, Jimmy, Carl, Sheen, and Brobot are watching the memory footage on the lab monitor. Brobot's arm has been repaired, and he has cables hooked up to an open access port on the back of his head.

"Let's see if we can identify the thing that took Brobot's arm," Jimmy says.

They watch the footage, which was filmed from Brobot's eyes. They watch him chase the boat, fall over, and then they get to the part when the boat falls down.

"Here! Right around here is when I meet the clown!" Brobot tells them.

They watch carefully. On the monitor, they can catch their first glimpse of Pennywise.

*"Wet enough for ya up there, is it?"*

Jimmy immediately criticizes the clown. "His syntax doesn't make any sense."

"Uhh, Jimmy." Carl reminds him, "clowns aren't supposed to make sense."

The four of them keep watching.

*"GO?!... Without...this?"*

Then Brobot tells them it's getting to the part when his arm is torn

off. They keep their eyes peeled, but what they see is the side of the curb and the street ahead because Brobot had turned his head that way when he began to reach deeper into the drain.

*"You'll float too"*

The footage starts to get a little shaky. The three of them are silent as they hear monstrous growls paired with Brobot's screams. Then the video feed cuts abruptly. It returns with interspersed shots of Brobot speeding home, crying and scared.

Carl and Sheen are certain it was Pennywise who did it. Carl claims, "You know you can never trust sewer clowns, Jimmy. And that man was definitely a sewer clown."

Sheen chimes in. "Did you hear that thing? That was no man. That was an an it!"

Carl yells, "I don't wanna be eaten by an it! I have so many llamas to see!"

"That's preposterous, guys! How can a sewer clown be able to morph into a monster? That's not possible. Judging by the sound of that growl, I'll bet that clown had some kind of circus lion or tiger waiting out of sight. Then, when Brobot least expected it, it lunged and ripped his arm off so the clown could take it to sell for scrap money. Clowns don't make a lot of money so that would explain it."

Brobot tells them, "I'm really scared guys. I wanna stop being scared so I can go back to being happy about everything."

Jimmy swivels his chair back to his keyboard, and he begins typing something. "Maybe I can check Brobot's empathometer to see what his emotional outputs are." The meter comes up on screen. "Pukin' Pluto! Brobot's fear levels are the highest they could possibly be!"

Carl stares at the fear levels for a while. The number goes down by a little bit. Then it goes down some more. "Hey guys, cheer up. Brobot's getting less afraid. He'll be back to normal in no time," Carl tells them.

Jimmy takes a look. Puzzled, he has his hand on his chin as he thinks

aloud, "That's funny. His fear levels shouldn't be going down in increments of 5 like this...it's supposed to be measured in 1s like any digital meter."

Sheen takes the floor. "Don't you guys see? The monster is feeding off Brobot's fear! It's drinking it very slowly through some kind of terror straw, just like an extra thick milkshake from the Candy Bar. Watch as it becomes hyped up on fear instead of sugar."

"Sheen that doesn't make any sense," Jimmy says. "How could a 'monster' hack into Brobot's empathometer if it's not digital? There's got to be another reason."

Carl begins to feel nervous. "Uhh, Jimmy. It's getting kinda late. I don't wanna be out after dark."

Sheen agrees, "Yeah, me too. Oh, look at the time! Ultra Lord starts in 5 minutes. C'mon Carl!"

The two zip off in an instant.

Jimmy turns to Brobot and offers him some solace. "Don't worry, we'll get to the bottom of this. But first, we gotta find that clown and ask him some questions..."

Brobot adds, "Yeah! And maybe he'll give me a balloon like he promised!"

Tired from the incident, Jimmy and Brobot leave Jimmy's lab, trying to take their minds off the terror.

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## **The next day...**

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Jimmy, Carl, and Sheen are walking to school. Jimmy and Carl look sleep-deprived. Sheen, however, is fully awake as he carries on with explaining what happened on Ultra Lord the previous night.

"It was so AWESOME! Ultra Lord used a positron rifle to blast King Ramiel of Polygonia and it was so COOL!"



"You've already seen that episode 20 times," Jimmy says. "We know what happens."

When the three get to class, they settle in and wait for the first bell. Cindy is chatting with Libby, both giggling to themselves. Then, Cindy turns to Jimmy.

"Hey Nerdtron," she says, "why didn't you bring Brobot with you to class today? It would be so much nicer to have him to block your ugly head from my peripheral vision!" Cindy and Libby laugh at the joke. Even Carl starts to giggle but stops when Jimmy gives him the stink eye.

Miss Fowl enters the class and says, "Alright, class! Braaaaaawk I'm going to begin taking aTTENDANCE!" She holds up her clipboard.

"Sheeeen?"

"Here!" Sheen raises his hand.

"Libby?"

"Here!" Libby replies with a smile on her face.

"Butch?" Ms. Fowl looks to his desk and sees it's empty. "That's funny...errraaaah he didn't call in absent. Probably late aGAIN!" She looks back at her clipboard and continues with attendance.

Not long after she finishes, Principal Willoughby walks into the classroom, looking concerned. "Miss Fowl," he says, "can I speak with you out in the hall very quickly. It's an E-M-E-R-G-A-N-C-Y."

Carl counts his fingers and mutters, "That spells...orange juice? Mmmmmm I could go for some right now." He smiles and licks his lips.

As Miss Fowl leaves the room, she turns to the students and says, "Now class, begin reading page TWENTY-SEVEN of your textbooks, and we'll discuss it when I come back errawww!" Everyone pulls out and opens their textbooks.

Miss Fowl walks out with Principal Willoughby. All of the students

put their books down, focusing on the doorway and trying to hear what is being said. All they hear is mumbling. Then, Miss Fowl walks back in. The kids put their books back in front of their faces, only to put them back down again to give her their attention.

"Children...eraaaaawk I have some very, very, very sad news," Miss Fowl says. "Butch's parents have told us that he didn't come home last night. They want to report him missing! Probably hiding out somewhere so he can skip school, erawwww the deLINQUENT."

Carl and Sheen glance at one another, both having the same look of fear and panic. Carl whispers to Sheen, "She has no clue."

Jimmy, on the other hand, attempts to calm the situation with science. "Don't worry everyone! I can find him using the technology in my lab." Jimmy gets up and walks to Butch's desk, where he feels around inside and finds a hair. "A-ha! A DNA sample!" He places it inside a baggie and gets back to his desk. "I'll have my computer run a DNA match search for results within a 50-mile radius. It'll survey Retroville and all surrounding areas just to be safe."

Cindy says, "Oh yeah, and what if you can't find him? Then what, Nerdtron?"

Jimmy is taken aback for a moment, but he finds the right response. "That won't be an issue, Cindy. My computer is capable of detecting life of any size, down to the smallest microbes. It'll find Butch, no problem."

Miss Fowl intervenes, "Settle down class, braww! Let's carry on with today's lesson erawwww."

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In Jimmy's lab later that day, he, Goddard, and Brobot are near his computer. Brobot is rather quiet. He doesn't say much while they prepare to examine the DNA in the strand of Butch's hair Jimmy collected earlier.

Jimmy holds the hair up to a scanner for DNA analysis. The computer analyzes it and maps out Butch's DNA along with a picture of Butch on the corner of the screen.

"OK," Jimmy says, "now scan within a 50-mile radius for any signs of his nucleotides!"

The computer analyzes the DNA and pulls up a map showing everywhere within a 50-mile radius of Retroville. After a few minutes of scanning, a message pops up:

***No matches found.***

"What?" Jimmy looks quizzically at the screen. "That's absurd. Try a 100-mile radius."

The computer repeats the process and still the message pops up: *No matches found.*

"Try a 500-mile radius."

***No matches found.***

"1,000-mile radius?"

***No matches found.***

Jimmy turns his chair around. "Aw gas planet," he says, "there has to be a trace of Butch *somewhere*."

Brobot says, "I want to find him so he doesn't have to feel afraid anymore."

"I know Brobot, I want to find him too. I can't even imagine anything bad happening to him, even if he's a real bully, but he's not coming up in the search. He must be really far away from here. He just *has* to turn up at some point." He looks at the monitor and thinks, *I hope*.

The doorbell for the lab rings, and Carl and Sheen appear on the screen. Jimmy lets them in via the schute. When they land in front of Jimmy, Sheen immediately starts talking. "Hi Jimmy! Hi Brobot! So did you find Butch?"

"I'm afraid not. I couldn't even locate him within a 1,000-mile radius. He must be far from Retroville at this point."

Carl, visibly upset, says, "I'm gonna miss getting punched in the stomach by him." Soon he becomes scared as a troubling thought occurs to him. "You guys...what if that clown got him?"

Jimmy and Sheen look at Carl in disbelief.

"That's ridiculous," Jimmy says. "There's no way a clown could have gotten Butch. Butch *loves* beating up clowns, remember?"

Sheen's eyes briefly light up and he says, "Carl, do you know what this means?"

Carl looks confused. "No, what?"

"Butch is going to lose his right arm just like Brobot," Sheen proclaims. "When he gets back to class, I can finally beat him at an arm wrestling match!"

Jimmy objects. "Guys, calm down!. Pennywise is not some carnivorous monster. He's just a...socially...awkward...sewer clown. That's all."

Carl smiles and chuckles. "Socially awkward sewer clown, now that's funny!" But then, he becomes mortified in an instant. "Oh no. Jimmy...if Pennywise lives in the sewers...then that means it'll be able to enter your lab." He is becoming more paranoid and compulsively looking around the lab. "Don't you guys see? We're practically sitting ducks!"

Brobot screams in terror as Sheen grabs Carl and tries to shake some sense into him. "Get a hold of yourself, Carl! Pennywise is not going to attack us in Jimmy's lab! It would only attack us if we went down into the sewers. Or near the sewers. Or if we were standing over any manhole covers or storm drains. Or any holes in the ground that happen to connect to the sewers. Otherwise, we're *not in danger*!" He shakes Carl some more before letting go of him.

"I guess you're right, Sheen," Carl says. "It won't attack us unless we're in the sew-" Carl's eyes drift to a mirror on the wall several feet in front of him. He stares into it, only to see Pennywise waving back and holding a balloon. Carl is silent and terrified. Then, Pennywise

points directly at Carl and lets out an unearthly roar. Carl shrieks. **"IT'S GONNA EAT US IN THE LAB!"** Sheen tries to shake some more sense into Carl.

"Knock it off you two," Jimmy interjects. "We just have to hope for the best. Butch is a tough guy, after all. And like I said, he hurts clowns, so even if he was taken by Pennywise-which he wasn't-he probably just got lost and ended up somewhere far away."

"But Jimmy," Sheen says, "can't you see that something FREAKY is going on?"

"Well, Sheen, if you must know, I have reasons to trust science." Jimmy says with eyes closed, confident in every word.

Carl says, "But science can't explain Pennywise!" He pauses a moment and looks puzzled. "Can it?"

Jimmy offers a rebuttal. "Sure there are things science hasn't been able to explain yet, but I'm sure it can explain Pennywise."

"And what if it can't?" Sheen interjects this time. "What if Pennywise is beyond our comprehension?" Jimmy is silent, trying to find an answer. "A-HA!"

But before Sheen can keep going, the lights begin to flicker. The boys go silent. Carl then mutters, "Uh oh...clicked light flickering. That's a bad sign in horror movies..."

"But Carl," Sheen says, we're not in a horror movie! Everyone knows only jocks and cheerleaders get to star in horror movies. Who else would the serial killer look for?"

Then, a red balloon floats into the lab. As it floats closer to the boys, the faint sound of echoed children's laughter can be heard.

Brobot lights up. "There's that balloon Pennywise promised me!" It floats closer, the sound of laughter getting more audible. "OK...now I don't want it anymore."

"Stand back everyone!" Jimmy commands. He quickly activates the laser in his wristwatch and shoots the balloon with a neon green

burst. It pops, and blood splatters everywhere nearby, mainly on the four of them. Sheen is the first to voice his disgust: "Ewwwww, what is this?"

Carl, nearly crying and shaking, screams, "THIS IS BLOOD, SHEEN!"

Jimmy then presses a button and a few giant scrubbers come down from the ceiling. In seconds, they are sparkling clean again. Still scared, but clean.

Then, a haunting but distant voice echoes through the lab: "We all float down here, Jimmy, Carl, and Sheen! And I haven't forgotten you too, Brobot. You'll float too!" Brobot begins to shudder in horror. The voice laughs hysterically as it fades into silence. The three are quiet once more.

Not long after, Sheen turns to Jimmy, almost enraged, and says, "See? Pennywise is a monster! There is no way you can explain this with science!"

Carl adds, "Jimmy, can you come up with an anti-sewer-clown-monster-repellant or something? This is getting weird."

"Carl, that would be impossible. And impractical, at that," Jimmy explains.

"Admit it, you can't explain what Pennywise is!" Sheen says this with an air of defiance.

Jimmy is stumped but doesn't want to admit defeat. "Well, would you look at the time! It's been a long day, so I think I'll be going to bed soon. Why don't you guys go home so you can rest as well? After all, it must be exhausting being so scared of a sewer clown!"

Carl says, "But it's 6:45PM." Then, the chute tubes suck them both back up and take them up to the front of the shed. With the late afternoon sun sinking lower on the horizon, Sheen says, "Oh well, guess it's a good thing to get home before it gets dark." Carl nods and both depart together.

Back in the lab, Jimmy sighs with relief as the pressure of having Carl and Sheen breathing down his neck is finally gone. He turns to

Brobot and is startled to see Brobot's eyes dimmed, as a shadow hangs over his face.

"What's wrong Brobot?"

Brobot looks up at Jimmy. "I don't wanna play any of Pennywise's games anymore. They're scary. I don't want to live on this planet anymore! But I don't wanna be too far from you. I need family!" Jimmy wants to tell Brobot to calm down, but the metal boy is badly shaken.

"Wait a minute, Brobot! What if I built you a Mom and Popbot so you could have family wherever you go? I could have them built tonight and then I could bid you farewell before I leave for school tomorrow morning. You can spend the night getting acquainted with them!"

Brobot lifts his chin. "You really mean it? Oh, thank you big brother! You're the best!" He lifts his skinny fists like antennas to the Moon. And that's where he wants to go; "Jimmy...I want to live on the Moon. That way I'm not on Earth, and I can live peacefully with my robot parents!" Jimmy, with a hopeful smile on his face, puts on his welding visor and gets to work.

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## The next day...

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Class is in session, and Butch is still missing. His absence can be felt as the class remains silent. That is, of course, until Libby says, "Uh, guys, I don't mean to make the situation seem worse, buuuuut NICK ISN'T HERE!" She points to his desk, now empty.

Many of the students look as if they're unaware of the situation. Some of the kids who sit near Nick don't even pay attention, distracting themselves with chit-chat.

Cindy says, "Calm down, Libby. Maybe he's just late. Not like that's never happened before."

Sheen chimes in. "Yeah! One time he showed up to class 30 minutes before the last bell rang. How he didn't get a detention, we may

never know..."

Then Miss Fowl enters the classroom, and she's stoic. "Arrrahh I don't know how to tell all of you this, but Nick didn't come home last night!" The whole class erupts into nervous chatter, like they did the previous day. Miss Fowl continues. "Braaaaawk, don't be alarmed children, it's likely he and Butch are just skipping SCHOOL. After all, those two hold the record for the most DEMERITS in the entire school, braaaaaw."

Carl leans over to Sheen and whispers, "She *still* has no clue."

Cindy turns to Jimmy. "Sooooo, any luck finding Butch with your DNA finder?"

"I'm afraid not...I searched up to a 1,000-mile radius with no results. He's probably somewhere far away from here, like Alaska or North Dakota," he tells her.

"Well then think of something else," she says. "Because if anyone else goes missing in this class because you won't accept that something's going on, I'll knock you back into the Roman Empire! You got that?" She shows him her fist.

"I already figured that much, Vortex," he says.

Later, at lunchtime, Carl and Sheen are walking with their lunch trays to find a seat. They walk across the cafeteria to where Jimmy is seated- with Cindy and Libby, oddly enough. Both look unenthusiastic. Carl and Sheen are hesitant to join in, but eventually they sit down at the table and jump right into the conversation.

"Ah, there you guys are! I was just explaining to Cindy and Libby about my foolproof plan to keep us safe." Jimmy reaches for his backpack and digs around inside. In his hand are really tiny microchips. "Normally, I put these tracking chips on birds to monitor their migration patterns. But today, I'm making them official Neutron Kid Locators. They use GPS technology to pinpoint an exact location. There is no way that anyone could go missing if they've got one of these!" Just then, various other students in the lunchroom get up and crowd around the table in curiosity.



Jimmy continues, "Everybody, take a chip and put it somewhere you know you won't lose it. This will allow me to find your exact location...even if it is Alaska or North Dakota. See? No need to be scared!" He begins handing out microchips to everyone around him. Carl and Sheen are about to grab a couple when Jimmy stops them. "Oh, you guys don't need to take any. I already gave you tracking chips."

Carl and Sheen both look weirded out, until Carl remembers and says, "Oh yeeeah, you were telling me not to eat it. It looked so bite-sized though..."

Jimmy frowns. "Carl, did you eat your chip?"

"Nuh-uh!" Carl stands defiantly before relenting. "Okay, maybe I did." Jimmy sighs, rolls his eyes, and hands him a new microchip.

When he gets around to handing one to Cindy, she immediately refuses the chip.

"Are you serious Neutron? We don't need your gadgets to help us get found; we need them to PREVENT us from going missing or getting killed." Everybody gasps at the mention of death. Realizing this, Cindy tries to backtrack. "Uhhhhh did I say that? I meant 'go missing.'" She awkwardly smiles.

Sheen then decides to add to the tension, "Don't worry guys, they weren't killed. They were just dragged underground by a bloodthirsty sewer clown." A few of the kids gasp in horror.

Cindy screams, but she quickly covers her mouth. After regaining her composure, she says, "D-d-did you just say...b-bloodthirsty sewer clown?" She is visibly shaking.

"Yeeeeeeah, Pennywise the Dancing Clown," Sheen says. "Although he doesn't really do much dancing, now that I think about it." More kids in the classroom begin to shudder and feel uncomfortable.

Cindy steps forward. "That clown keeps showing up in my nightmares. But then the other night I heard voices coming from the drain in my bathroom sink. They said they were kids...dead kids.

There was a red balloon that came up from the drain that exploded and blood went everywhere. It was that clown! But my mom didn't even see the blood! No one believed me!"

Then another kid begins sharing. "I saw a clown on the playground yesterday after I left detention. He invited me to join him, but I was already running the other way. He was scary!"

Yet another kid shares their experiences. "He was sitting in a storm drain a few days ago. Tried to offer me a balloon. No way, balloons freak me out! Clowns are fine, though."

Cindy takes the floor once again. "So it's obvious that there's some kind of supernatural monster disguising itself as a freaky sewer clown, and it's even more obvious now that it got Butch and Nick. So what should we do?"

Sheen raises his hand. "Don't take balloons from sewer clowns!"

Libby chimes in, "Y'all are starting to sound like a bunch of maniacs. I don't need some microchip to keep me safe. If I see Pennywise, I'll just punch that clown in the gut! Maybe I'll show him some karate!" Many of the kids cheer her on for her bravery. She tells Jimmy, "Who needs science when you can just beat up a killer clown?" Jimmy clenches his lips. He is angry, but also worried for her safety.

Carl pushes through the crowd of kids to get to Libby. "Don't do it, Libby! The It will get you!"

"Yeah, don't try to go after it! It's some kind of freaky magic sewer clown," Sheen says, wiggling his fingers for emphasis.

Libby looks confused. "Carl, Sheen, y'all need to stop watching so many *dumb* horror movies. I can handle Pennywise, so don't worry. Watch me take it on, and then I'll steal its balloons and give them to orphans." She smiles in a smug fashion as the crowd of children cheers her on again.

"Please, Libby," Jimmy chimes in, "take a microchip. At the very least, for your own safety. I don't want anyone else in our class disappearing."

"Jimmy," she says, "that's nice, but I don't need a microchip. I just need to practice my moves!" she says as she busts out a few karate moves. Jimmy, Carl, and Sheen get up to throw their garbage away and get ready to head back to class.

As they walk down the hallway, Sheen says, "I'll catch up with you guys in a bit. I gotta go take a whizz."

Sheen is standing in front of a urinal, singing the Ultra Lord theme song as he does his business. Once he zips his fly, he hears something coming from inside the urinal. "What was that? It'd better not be who I think it is." He inches a little closer. Nothing. "Oh well, I guess it was just my imagination." He flushes, and blood begins to trickle down the back of the urinal. "Woah, the pipes must be really backed up or something!" The blood doesn't stop. Sheen takes a step back as the urinal begins to overflow. "Yeah, I'm just gonna go wash my hands." He walks to the sink, puts soap on his hands, and then turns on the faucet to find more blood as it waterfalls out of the spout. "On second thought, I'll just get going."

As he zips to the bathroom doorway, a floating balloon awaits him. He pushes it aside and tries to push it into the bathroom, away from the hall. As he faces the direction of the bathroom, he sees Pennywise standing on top of the flood of blood, holding multiple balloons and laughing while waving at Sheen.

It says, "Doncha wanna balloon, Sheen? They float! They aaaall *float*!" Sheen is mortified and momentarily paralyzed. Then, he regains his senses, turns around, and bolts for class while trying not to scream the whole way.

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Later that day, Jimmy is in his lab waiting for Sheen and Carl to come by. When they arrive, the two are holding a giant stack of papers and binders. "What's all this," Jimmy says, "the homework Butch and Nick are behind on?"

They walk over to a table and set down the papers. Carl says, "Sheen and I did some research after school."

Jimmy looks at the two quizzically. "What did you guys research?"

Anything important?"

"Yeah Jimmy," Sheen says, "we decided to look into this mysterious clown-thingy, and we found a bunch of weird stuff. Check it out!" He hands Jimmy an old newspaper. Jimmy reads the headline aloud:

"Retroville Serial Killer Sentenced to Death."

"This was 81 years ago!...hmmm...it says the killer had confessed one night after 'a visit from a spirit' telling him to confess. Obviously, this guy was delusional."

"Or maybe he was paid a visit by a familiar sewer clown," Sheen suggests. He hands Jimmy another one, which Jimmy also reads aloud:

"'Dozens of Children Killed In Elementary School Fire'.

"Pukin' Pluto! This was when the old Lindbergh Elementary School building was burned down! That was...54 years ago."

Carl hands him another newspaper. "Here's a more recent one," he says.

"More recent?" Jimmy grabs the newspaper. "This one is from 27 years ago...from today's date nonetheless!...huh.

'Fireworks Accident Kills Seven at County Fair.'

"Holy moly, it's as if these tragedies keep getting worse." He takes a closer look at the newspaper. "Hmmm, there's something about this photograph that really bothers me. But it's so worn and aged. Goddard!" Goddard barks and his ears pop up. "I want you to scan this picture and try to reconstruct it with better clarity." Goddard scans the newspaper picture. After a few seconds of processing, Goddard projects the image out of one of his mechanical eyes. The three of them begin to analyze it.

"Over there!" Sheen walks over to the wall and points at the projection. "Look right there, it's the clown!"

Carl and Jimmy then notice what looks like Pennywise holding

balloons in the background, waving at the camera that took the picture. Jimmy leans in closer to get a better look. "It can't be...that can't be the same clown." Just then, the image of Pennywise comes alive. The three are startled by his movement. A very faint laugh is heard inside the picture, followed by a very distant "You'll all float down here!" Pennywise holds his balloons higher and laughs.

"That's enough for now, Goddard," Jimmy says as Goddard turns off his projector.

Carl asks, "Are you convinced yet, Jimmy?"

"Not a chance, Carl. That could have been a crazy glitch."

"Here, Jimmy, you'll definitely need to see this!" Carl hands him a worn-out flyer from even further in the past. It's an old carnival advertisement promoting trapeze artists, strongmen, a thrilling ferris wheel...and a special performance from Pennywise the Dancing Clown. Jimmy is speechless. "Let me use my handheld carbon dater to figure out how old this is." He holds it up to the paper, and the machine lists it as 108 years old. Jimmy has no words, only stutters of incomplete ideas.

"I...I...ALRIGHT so Pennywise seems to be some kind of timeless entity that likes to re-emerge every 27 years!"

Sheen leans in closer. "Aaaaand?"

"Aaaaand, he-I mean *it*--prefers to go after children. So it likely got Butch and Nick. OK? Are you both happy now?"

"Actually, I'm still pretty terrified," Carl admits. "It's a good thing I wore my rubber underpants again today. Let me tell ya, I've been like Niagara Falls all week." He giggles with a snort.

"Eeeeeew," Sheen says.

"Well guys," Jimmy says, "we're just going to have to make it through this. Sooner or later Pennywise will go back to sleep and we won't have to worry about it for another 27 years. No sweat! We'll habituate to its lame antics and we won't go missing or anything!"

Sheen nods enthusiastically. "Yeah, we'll stick together! We're a tight-knit team of losers! No one can replace us!"

Jimmy chuckles. "Team of losers? Maybe you two, but I'm a genius."

Carl asks, "Oh *yeah*? Did your genius get you invited to Brandon Doe's birthday party?"

"Is that the one where they had the flame-dancing karate magician," Sheen asks.

Carl shrugs. "I don't know, I wasn't invited."

"Neither was I," Jimmy says. "OK, we're a loser's team. I get that, but the point is that we stick together to thwart its efforts." The two agree. Jimmy explains, "Listen, guys, I have to get some homework done, and then I'm going to spend a few hours plotting a way to kill It. You guys should get home before dark." The two agree once again. They say their goodbyes and make their way for the exit. Jimmy decides it's time to go back into the house to have dinner with his parents.

At dinner time, Jimmy, Judy, and Hugh are all seated at the dinner table. Judy breaks the silence: "I'm sure going to miss Brobot and his Mombot and Popbot."

Jimmy adds in, "I know, Mom, but they'll be happier living on the Moon."

Judy continues. "I sure hope so. I still can't believe he wanted to leave Earth so badly. He seemed to really like it here. Was there any particular reason?"

Jimmy tries to find a legitimate answer that his mom will actually understand. He knows she won't believe him if he tells her about Pennywise. "Uh, well you see he had sort of a bully problem at school. The faculty didn't know what to do because he was made of metal and they thought he'd be impervious to getting hurt. But they didn't understand the emotional impact it had. His fear levels were through the roof!"

"Huh, how peculiar. He seemed so popular though." She continues

eating, having understood Jimmy's explanation.

Hugh then chimes in. "A bully? Now that's ridiculous! You see when I was Brobot's age, I wasn't afraid of getting bullied."

"What were you afraid of?" Jimmy asks.

"You see Jimbo, I was afraid of clowns."

Jimmy, feeling uncomfortable, asks, "Really? And why were you afraid of clowns?"

"Well you see, I was a young lad with an admiration for those make-upped busters we call clowns! I was at the County Fair with my Mom and Dad, I dunno....uh...25 years ago?" Jimmy's heart sinks.

"You mean 27 years ago?" Jimmy corrects.

"Right! It was 27 years ago! Say, how did you know that?"

"Uh...Lucky guess?" He shrugs.

"So I was at the County Fair, and there was this weird but goofy clown who wanted to show me and some other kids a whole tent filled with balloons. How could I resist? But just as I got near the tent, something caught my eye. It was a whole family of Mallard ducks! Boy, it was sight I'd never forget. The momma duck had this little tuft of feathers on her head and the babies followed her one-by-one like schoolchildren. Ohhh I left the clown and decided to go meet the ducks instead."

"So what happened?" Judy asks.

"Well, Sugar Booger, not even a minute later, the tent exploded! Ka-BOOM! I was thrown to the ground...and...and...the ducks ran away!" Hugh begins crying. "I...I never got the chance to feed them any breadcrumbs! So beautiful...taken from me so soon."

Jimmy is still uncomfortable. However, he wants to know more. "But Dad, what happened to the clown and the kids?"

"Oh, they died in some horrible fireworks accident. It was terrible! No

one ever found the clown's body, though. Only the kids were found! I believed that the clown killed them, and from that point, my love for clowns turned into a gut-wrenching fear of them." Hugh pauses for a moment to collect his thoughts.

"The whole state banned fireworks after that tragedy, but you know what they didn't ban?"

"What?" both Judy and Jimmy ask.

"Feeding breadcrumbs to the ducks! Still as legal as wearing your underpants on the outside of your trousers."

"Hugh, they banned wearing your underpants on the outside in 1990," Judy reminds him.

"Ohhh that's right! Well, clowns aren't illegal!"

"Hang on a minute, Hugh," Judy says, "What you just described was the plot to that horror movie we watched the other night. Remember? The clown killed all of those kids because he was a psycho."

"OH! That's right! Maaaaan, I always get childhood traumas and horror movies mixed up. Happens to everyone, I suppose!" Hugh shrugs.

Jimmy becomes even more uncomfortable. "I don't mean to be rude, but can I be excused? I...need to work on this important project for school."

"But Jimmy, you've barely touched your food!" Judy remarks.

"Don't worry Mom, I just need to work on this project. The livelihood of my classmates depends on it," he says as he walks away. "If you need me, I'll be in my lab with Goddard..."

Hugh and Judy are now left alone. Judy is concerned about Jimmy.

"I'm worried about Jimmy. He seems to be more on-edge, and he just said the livelihood of his classmates depends on that project he's working on. I swear, things have been feeling really weird lately," she



remarks.

"You sure are right, Sugar Booger. Maybe it's time to bake a pie," he suggests.

"I don't know, Hugh, we've already made three pies this week," she reminds him.

"Ohhh, but don't you remember what Aunt Moe always said? 'There is never such a thing as too much pie,'" he says.

"Well, I guess I've been dying to try out this new recipe I found in a magazine." She shows him the recipe clipping. "Apple cinnamon pecan walnut buttercream pie." Hugh clasps his hands together and smiles with delight.

Jimmy is in his chair at the computer in the lab. He is beginning to plan out a method for killing Pennywise. Goddard is by his side. "I've got it! We'll need some kind of high-energy power source to cancel out its magic powers." Goddard barks in agreement. "We just need to figure out an effective way to deliver such a powerful current..."

Just as he's starting to type information into his computer, he hears a faint, old man's voice: "Jimbo? Is that you?" He recognizes this voice as his grandfather's. "Grandpa Neutron?"

"You don't even recognize your own grandpa? Now that's just inconsiderate of you, young James." His grandfather walks out of the dark corner, cane and all. Jimmy is taken aback. "This can't be. You passed away when I was in first grade! Is that really you?"

"Why wouldn't it be? Who else would say, 'Well ain't that just a plate of hot rats!'?" Jimmy seems less confused. It's really him. Or so it seems.

"Grandpa, give me a hug!" As Jimmy walks over to him, he grabs his Hypno-Ray and points it at Grandpa Neutron. The rays stop him in his tracks.

"You will now tell me who you *really* are, 'Grandpa Neutron.'"

In an instant, a puff of smoke appears where Grandpa Neutron is

standing. From it, Pennywise the Clown appears.

"Beep Beep! Hahahahaha, wassa madda? Don't you respect your elders?" Pennywise taunts.

"I KNEW IT!" Jimmy exclaims. "I'm not afraid of you, you slime!"

"HA! That's what they all say..." Pennywise opens up his mouth and reveals hundreds of sharp teeth. His white gloves tear as his hands grow into large monster talons. Jimmy shrieks and runs for the exit, with Goddard following right behind. He eventually escapes the lab, only to find that Pennywise did not chase them. Out of breath, Jimmy pants, "Ha!...he...didn't...even...chase us! What a foolish creature it is..." They walk to the house. "I think we should just spend the rest of the night inside, Goddard. I can do my brainstorming from the safety-errr, comfort-of my own room." They go inside the house.

Up in Jimmy's room, with Goddard by his side, he picks up where he left off before the intrusion in his lab. "I don't know what to make that will defeat it, Goddard. Part of me thinks I could just use my new time booth to escape to the past." Goddard just looks at him. "Ahhh, you're right. I shouldn't try to run away from this mess. But ya know, I *could* meet some of history's greatest minds: Pythagoras, Thomas Edison, heck even Isaac Newton! Maybe they can help me think of a way to get rid of Pennywise." Goddard looks at him again. "Fiiiine, I'll stay in the present and find a way to stop it." Goddard shakes his head in approval. "If I'm going to be taking on a supernatural entity, I'll need to think outside the box...or the third dimension, in this case." He begins writing down some ideas. Then, he finds a good idea to pursue. "I know! I'll make a net out of an electromagnetic conducting mesh. I'll throw it over Pennywise, and that should suppress any of its supernatural powers." He begins to draw out a blueprint.

As he keeps drawing, he finds it harder and harder to keep his eyes open. He yawns every few minutes. Before he knows it, he is fast asleep at his desk, pencil still in hand. The moon crosses the night sky and, before long, it is morning. Jimmy wakes up. He looks at the plan he drew and checks it over for any errors. "This is perfect! I'll just make it when I get home from school." He gets up from his desk. "Speaking of school, let's hope no one else went missing yesterday,"

he remarks with worry as he leaves his room.

A little over an hour later, Jimmy is walking into school. Carl and Sheen are by their lockers and, as Jimmy comes up to them, Sheen talks to him. "There you are, Jimmy! We've been plotting ways to kill Pennywise, and we wanted to get your opinion." Then he gestures at Carl to take it away.

"OK, hear me out Jimmy. What if you created a really severe rainstorm with a weather device? We flood Retroville, meaning the sewers will be filled to the brim with rainwater. Pennywise will either drown or get washed far away to the barrens outside Oldyville."

Sheens adds, "Yeah, and Oldyville is full of kids like us. Pennywise will see no reason to return to Retroville!"

Jimmy plays devil's advocate. "That's a good idea guys, but just one question...how can Pennywise drown or get washed away if it's a supernatural entity? Water has no effect if it doesn't even need air to begin with!"

Carl says, "Well, that's a good point Jimmy. I...uhhhh...you're right...welp, back to the drawing board."

"Listen fellas, I actually came up with an idea for a special net that can produce electromagnetic pulses. It should cancel out any of its dark magic."

"Magnets won't stop it!" Sheen proclaims. "Magnets only work for keeping crummy drawings up on the fridge."

"Sheen, this isn't the same as refrigerator magnets. We're taking several thousands of volts of electricity and creating a magnetic force so powerful, it'll vaporize any spirit."

The first bell rings. They walk to their classroom. Once they walk in, the class is still. They can tell that things aren't getting any better. They look around, and everyone else is in class today except for Butch, Nick...and now Libby. Carl and Sheen sit in their seats and try to hold back their cries of terror. Jimmy, however, isn't terrified, he's

just very anxious. The moment he sits down, Cindy turns to him. The look on her face adorns many emotions: terror, sadness, resentment, and anger-the latter being what she projects onto Jimmy.

"Nerdtron!" She punches him on his shoulder. "I swear to Galileo, you're gonna **pay** for this!"

"For what?" Jimmy asks.

"For letting my best friend DIE at the hands of some stupid killer sewer clown! This was 100% preventable, but *you* had to assert yourself as mister high and mighty. Well, what do you have to say now?" She starts to tear up. "We were supposed to have karate together tonight..." She is crying, and Jimmy feels uncomfortable.

Miss Fowl walks into class. "Braaaaawwwk, so now Libby is joining the Truant Team and skipping class with the other two!? That's just PEACHY." She folds her arms in disapproval.

Carl whispers to Sheen, "She will *never* have a clue."

Cindy is furious that Miss Fowl won't acknowledge the disappearance of the students. Miss Fowl has her back turned to the class as she begins writing on the chalkboard. Before Cindy can get out of her seat to confront her, Jimmy pulls her back and whispers into her ear, "She's oblivious because Pennywise is using its magic to distract the adults." Cindy looks at him, as if defeated, and she punches his shoulder again as tears well in her eyes.

They go back to sitting normally. As class goes on, Cindy is visibly uneasy in her seat. At one point, she writes a note and passes it to Jimmy: "No more fooling around. You and your little losers club need to take down that killer clown." Jimmy is nervous, so he hands the note to Carl and Sheen. The two look at it together. Sheen quietly tells Carl, "See? We *are* losers!" Carl nods his head in agreement.

The last bell finally rings, and all three of the boys leave school together. As they walk home, Jimmy tells them, "I'll see you guys at my lab in approximately two hours. That should be enough time for me to develop and test my electromagnet net." Carl and Sheen agree, and Jimmy takes his jetpack home to save time.

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Jimmy and Goddard get ready to test out the electromagnetic net. They walk over to an old TV set placed in the middle of the floor. Its antennas are bent, many of the knobs are missing, and a strip of duct tape across the panel above the screen has "Haunted" written on it.

"Okay, let's see what this thing can do. Of course it's highly unlikely that a TV set could be haunted...but hey, a test subject is a test subject!"

He turns on the TV, and he is greeted with a high-pitched demon shriek. Goddard is covering his ears and trembling. Jimmy dials in channel 666. Then, a skull appears amidst the snow and it warns, **"Your soul will be mine!"**

Jimmy throws the net over the TV set. The demon begins to get angry. "Do you know who you are dealing with? Take this thing off me right this instant!" Jimmy presses the button on the remote control. As the net begins to electrify, the TV demon shrieks again, only this time in pain. Within seconds, the TV goes blank and silent, with smoke coming out of the back ventilation ports. Jimmy looks at Goddard, "I think we'll have Pennywise in the bag. Or net, in this case." He chuckles, but Goddard just tilts his head. "Oh come on, that one was clever and you know it!"

Just then, the doorbell rings and Jimmy presses a button to let in Carl and Sheen. They enter the lab and immediately see the net placed over the TV set. Carl recognizes it. "Hey, that's the junk TV set that's been in my neighbor's alleyway for over a month. I ain't watching anything from that. It's haunted."

"Not anymore, Carl," Jimmy tells him.

"So I take it the net works," Sheen asks.

"You bet it works! That demon didn't even get two words in before I converted all of his energy into positively charged ions. Pennywise won't know what hit him...er...it!"

"But this is a demon sewer clown we're dealing with, not some demon TV set!" Sheen reminds him.

"I know, Sheen. But this net doesn't fry ordinary TV sets. It targets abnormal energy patterns and converts them to energy that is consistent with our present dimension. It'll do the same with Pennywise."

"I can't believe you built that in 2 hours," Carl remarks. The time booth on the other side of the lab catches Carl's attention. "Hey, Jimmy. Why don't we just go back in time and stop Pennywise from settling underneath Retroville?"

"No Carl," Jimmy says, "I've already thought it over a dozen times. There is no point in going back in time to try and stop this mess. It can only be defeated if we stick together and use this electromagnetic net."

"I mean we *could* go back and kill Pennywise before Retroville even existed," Sheen suggests.

"The main problem with that is we don't know exactly when Pennywise came here. So for now, we'll have to make due." He reaches over for a bag filled with supplies. "Now listen, I've already determined that the best way to kill it is if we go where it lives...in the sewers of Retroville. I've packed everything we need. Walkie-talkies, flashlights, and even fear inhibitor pills-just to make it harder for Pennywise to want to kill us."

"Sounds like a good old-fashioned sewer clown hunt to me," Sheen exclaims. "It's just like when my uncle in Florida took me hunting for alligators, only difference is we're dealing with an entity that looks like a clown. But it bites like a gator."

Carl hesitantly asks, "Sheen, do alligators in Florida eat kids too?"

"Of course they do! In fact, one of them almost got my baby cousin! But my uncle took his machete and wham! Now my baby cousin wears that gator as a pair of boots." Carl pulls out a piece of paper labeled "Places to never visit...EVER!" On the list are the names of various states and imaginary places. He grabs a pencil and writes Florida down.

Jimmy instructs them to follow him to a different part of the lab.

Eventually, the three make their way to a large pipe opening. Jimmy pulls out a remote control, and his hover car flies over. As the three get in, Jimmy tells them, "My hoverbike can reach a top speed of 200 mph, and since Pennywise doesn't seem able to run any faster than your average clown, we'll be safe."

"Psssh what a slowpoke! My uncle told me that the gators in Florida can run up to 20 mph," Sheen adds. Carl gulps and looks nervous.

The hover car begins to lift into the air and flies through a pipe leading into the sewers. Once in the sewers, the three of them ready themselves for battle.

Sheen shouts, "Come on out, Pennywise! We've got some tasty children here. I hope you're ready to feast!"

Jimmy drives the hover car around, while the other two are holding flashlights and searching along the periphery. All they see are tunnels, pipes, an occasional rat, and lots and lots of sewer water. Plus, they see the occasional discarded childrens' clothes, backpacks, and toys-the sight of which makes them scared.

Jimmy suggests, "Maybe you guys could pretend to act like a couple of lost, scared kids? That might lure Pennywise out."

Carl and Sheen look at each other. Carl begins by putting his hands in front of his mouth to project his voice, "Anybody there? Heeeeelp!"

Sheen follows his lead, "Somebody! *Find us!* We can't take it any longer!"

"Sheen," Jimmy interrupts, "You want to sound less like you're suffering and more like you're on the *verge* of suffering. That will make Pennywise want to show up so it can make things worse and then feed on your fear."

"Okay!" Sheen cries, "Hey! Ultra Lord is gonna be on soon. Can someone help me find my way home? I can't stand to miss Ultra Lord! PLEASE!" Sheen begins to inch closer to actually crying.

"I suppose that's better," Jimmy remarks.

The two keep shouting and hollering, hoping to draw out the clown.

The three of them circle the sewers for a good three hours. Carl and Sheen have kept calling out, on and off, but no response from Pennywise. All three look visibly exhausted, bored, and uneasy. Feeling impatient, Carl tries to convince Jimmy, "Come on, Jimmy, can we go back now? I don't think Pennywise is very hungry. Let's come back tomorrow."

"Yeah, or maybe it's gone back to sleep for another 27 years," Sheen adds. "No need to come back then!"

"It's no use, guys." Jimmy explains, "If we go back, another one of our classmates will go missing. Besides, there's no way of telling if Pennywise went back into hibernation."

Carl curls up in his seat, "I don't know if I can do this anymore, Jimmy."

"But Carl, we've made it this far! Don't give up! That's what Pennywise wants you to do!" Sheen attempts to reassure him.

*"I wanna go home..."*, Carl mutters.

"We can't go home now," Sheen rebuts.

Jimmy is becoming visibly agitated. "I don't want to hear any complaining, guys. Let's just get this over with. We can try going on foot and luring it that way."

"Nuh-uh, I'm not getting my feet wet in sewer water! I'll get an infection," Carl asserts. "Let's just come back tomorrow when we're more rested and less afraid."

"We can't come back tomorrow," Sheen says. "Tomorrow we might all be dead!"

"I don't care, Sheen! I wanna go home!" Carl is fighting back tears.

Jimmy has reached the end of his patience. *"Enough!"* I have had it with waiting endlessly for Pennywise to show up. I am so sick of wasting my time trying to catch this thing. It's not even a monster



worth catching! It's just a dumb, weird, idiotic, SOCIALLY AWKWARD SEWER CLOWN!" The last four words echo across the sewers, in and out of the tunnels. The three of them look nervous and worried.

"I'd like to say hello, Jimmy, Carl, and Sheen," a familiar raspy voice says. Each of them blinks when they hear their name. "But apparently...I'm not very good at talkin' to people!" The three turn around and see Pennywise standing mere feet behind the hover car. It looks disappointed and angry, one hand balled in a fist on its hip while the other holds an array of balloons.

Carl immediately shrieks. "AHHHH! **IT'S THE IT!**"

Sheen clenches his fists and gestures at boxing.

Jimmy turns around and gets the net ready to throw. "We have you now, Pennywise! Don't bother trying to escape! There's no way out of here." Jimmy quickly readies the net and throws it over Pennywise. The net drapes over Pennywise's entire body, and it struggles to get it off as Jimmy switches on the current. Despite the voltage, Pennywise opens its mouth to sprout several sharp teeth and rips open the net.

"Impossible," Jimmy shouts.

When the net is finally off of Pennywise, it lets out a small roar and starts stepping toward the hover car.

Jimmy floors the gas pedal, jolting the hover car forward. However, because Carl and Sheen are sitting on the ledge of the hover car, they fall off and land in the sewer water right in front of Pennywise's clown shoes. Carl and Sheen get up and run the other way, shouting out for Jimmy as they run. They eventually decide to run into a tunnel.

"Carl," Sheen says, "Let's make a run for that tunnel over there!"

"But I can't see which tunnel you're pointing to! And my feet are soaking wet," Carl responds.

"This one right here! Follow me!" Sheen runs into a random tunnel, but Carl runs into the one next to it. Too afraid to go back, they keep

going down the tunnels.

Sheen wanders through in hope of finding Jimmy and, hopefully, Carl. He eventually reaches a fork in the tunnel, where a single grate above allows for some light to shine in. "Jimmy? Carl? You guys nearby?"

Instead of hearing Jimmy or Carl's voice, he hears someone else's coming from the left tunnel. "Sheen? Is that you?" He recognizes a familiar girl's voice. "Sheen? Getch'yer butt over here and help me!"

Sheen lights up with hope. "Libby? Is that you?" He walks through the left tunnel and finds her standing in a corner looking at him.

"Sheen, come on!"

He approaches her. "Libby! I'm so glad you're alive! I take it you came down here to take down the clown like we did," he asks.

"Oh I came for the clown, alright," she tells him. "I came down here to *float* like the everyone else!"

Sheen is a little confused by what she meant. "Come on Libby, let's get you home!" He grabs her hand and tries to start walking her back. She doesn't budge, making Sheen pull harder. "Come on, Libby, I thought you said you were floating, not sinking!"

He turns around to find Libby has been replaced by Pennywise. Beside it are Butch, Nick, and Libby, all zombies with visible, large bite wounds. It seizes Sheen's hand and, in Libby's voice, says, "I am *floating*, doofus! We *all* float down here." Then it's voice changes back. "And you'll *float* too!"

Sheen begins to scream as Pennywise grabs his hand tighter. It slowly inches its mouth closer and closer to Sheen's arm, hundreds of sharp teeth ready to take a bite.

Jimmy, still speeding down the sewers, travels down a tunnel and finds Pennywise waiting for him at the end. Jimmy slams the brakes. Pennywise points at Jimmy and laughs. Then, it asks, "Donchu wanna balloon, Jimmy? Everybody wants a balloon! Hahaha...they float. They all float." It begins to walk closer to the hover car. "We *all* float

down here." Jimmy waits for it to get close enough. When the moment comes, he shouts, "NOW!" and he blasts it with his wristwatch laser. Just as the neon green burst zaps toward it, Pennywise jumps into the air and flies over Jimmy's hover car, doing a somersault. While airborne, a strange, bright orange light begins to emanate out of it's torso. Jimmy covers his eyes, while Goddard looks right into it and beings to short-circuit. Pennywise jumps down a drain right behind them.

Jimmy opens his eyes again, and he quickly tends to Goddard. "What happened to you, Goddard?" His screen lights up, although fuzzy and distorted, and displays a message: "I was in its deadlights. I saw..." The text only displays for about 5 seconds before Goddard reboots and comes back to normal. "Deadlights? Great, so now we've got that to worry about," Jimmy says. "Now how are we gonna kill it?" Then it finally dawns on him, "CARL AND SHEEN! We need to go back for them!" He turns the hover car 180 degrees and speeds toward the other way.

As Jimmy continues to reverse, he can hear Sheen screaming in the distance. "Sheen!" He grabs the walkie-talkie, but all he gets is static. "Oh for cryin' out loud! I'm coming Sheen!"

Then he gets a signal. It's Carl. "Jimmy?" The signal is poor. "I'm lost!...can't find where I...from!"

"Carl? Carl, where's Sheen?"

"I don't...we...different ways."

"I'm coming for you now, Carl. Don't forget to take your fear inhibitor!" He puts down the walkie-talkie and grabs the tracking device. "There, this should help me find them." He looks at the screen, and only Carl is showing up. Sheen is nowhere to be found, making Jimmy feel very concerned. He radios to Carl. "Carl, I'm coming for you! Listen! If you see Pennywise, just don't look into its deadlights!"

Carl, lost in another tunnel, is confused by Jimmy's directions. "What are deadlights?" No response. Carl takes the fear-inhibitor pill and begins to walk the other way. His sneakers can be heard swishing

around in the sewer water as the faint sound of children's laughter also creeps up. Carl is petrified. "Oh...oh no. It's the It... gotta avoid looking into its deadlights like Jimmy said..." He walks slowly. As he turns a corner, Pennywise is waiting for him.

"Hello, Carl! Donchu wanna balloon?"

Carl lets out a quick yelp and runs the other way, which Jimmy is able to observe on his tracker.

"Carl! Don't go off too far! You'll get even more lost!"

As Carl runs the other way, he sees Pennywise waiting for him at the other end. Much like with Jimmy, it taunts him and offers a balloon. Carl harshly rejects its balloons, "Nuh-uh! I wouldn't take a balloon from a sewer clown if my life depended on it!"

Then Pennywise tests him: "Maybe your life...does depend on it! Come on, bucko! Donchya want it?" Carl keeps rejecting the balloon. "Alright, fine," Pennywise concedes, "Then how about this?" Pennywise's torso begins to sprout elliptical holes that soon glow orange. Carl immediately realizes that it's the deadlights, and he covers his eyes.

"I'll ignore your deadlights as long as I have to! I'm not afraid of you, jerk!" Carl starts to walk slowly in the other direction. He bumps into a wall. "OW!" Then, he bumps into another wall. "OW! Jimmy! Hurry!" He keeps bumping into walls until finally a gentle pair of hands guides Carl in the right direction.

"There you go, Carl!" It's Jimmy's voice.

"Thank you, Jimmy," Carl says.

"Don't mention it," Jimmy replies.

Then, Carl opens his eyes to find that it was Pennywise who helped him, not Jimmy. The first thing Carl sees are the deadlights.

"Huh huh, I just *knew* ya wanted it," it tells him in its original voice.

Carl is thrown into a catatonic state. His eyes are soulless, empty.

Jimmy finally arrives to rescue Carl. "Carl, let's go! I don't think we can...Carl?" He finds Carl in his catatonic state and gasps. "NO! IT GOT MY BEST FRIENDS!" He attempts to snap Carl out of it, but to no avail. He tries everything from llama impressions to using the smell of fresh baked cookies. Nothing works. So, he grabs Carl's mindless body and begins to head back for the entrance to the lab.

Right as Jimmy pulls up to the exit, Sheen jumps in front and spreads his arms to get him to stop. Jimmy abruptly stops the hover car (once again), and he begs Sheen to come in so they can head back.

"You can't leave!" Sheen sounds desperate.

"No, we need to leave Sheen. Get in! Now!" Jimmy motions for him to hop in the hover car.

"But you can't leave now, Jimmy! You need to float with us!" Jimmy is shocked as he realizes that Sheen is acting like Pennywise. Sheen begins to walk closer to the hover car. "Come, Jimmy! Join us! Butch, Nick, Libby, and me are all floating down here!"

"Yeah, Jimmy," Carl suddenly mutters. "Float with us!" His body begins to start levitating. His eyes glowing with the deadlights. Jimmy turns his hover car around again and heads the other direction. After a few minutes of fleeing, he finds that Pennywise is with Carl and Sheen, who are now both decaying zombies. The three of them collectively block the exit. They begin chanting together: "You'll float too! You'll float too! You'll float too!"

Jimmy is out of options. His best friends have had their souls taken, and he is certain Pennywise will attack him next. Without anything to defeat the sewer clown, Jimmy is left to contemplate a solution.

"Come on, think...think...*think!*" Inside Jimmy's head, he recalls an array of events from the past few days. He remembers a montage of all the old documents including the newspapers and the flyer for the circus, the handheld carbon dater, and when Carl asked "Why don't we just go back in time and stop It from settling in Retroville?" The ideas are synthesizing...

"Brain blast! I can carbon-date Pennywise's DNA to determine just

how old it really is. Then, I'll go back in time and prevent it from settling in Retroville." He points at Pennywise. "Goddard! Snatch a hair off Pennywise's head!" Goddard extends his neck and quickly plucks a red hair from its scalp. "Ow! Ya no good mutt," it complains. Jimmy seals the hair in a baggie and then proceeds to floor it for the exit, knocking everyone over in the process. "Sorry guys! I promise it won't happen again in the next timeline!"

Eventually, Jimmy and Goddard make their way back to the lab. Jimmy lands the hover car, and both get out to begin the final plan. Jimmy pulls out the carbon dater and begins analyzing Pennywise's DNA. It takes exceptionally longer to analyze than the flyer from the other day. After it's done, the carbon dater gives the results: ***"2 billion years old."***

"Pukin' Pluto, it's really old!" The carbon dater provides an exact date for him, so now Jimmy walks over to the time booth. There, he punches in the date given by the carbon dater. "Alright, Goddard, let's see if we can go back in time and prevent this whole mess from ever happening!" Goddard barks in agreement. The time booth lights up and, within seconds, vanishes into an electrical storm.

The time machine travels down a light tunnel and lands on Precambrian Earth. Jimmy and Goddard step out onto the surface as it was 2 billion years ago. They are standing where Retroville will one day be, in the middle of Laurentia. He looks up in the sky and sees a meteor. When he holds the carbon dater up to the falling meteor, it determines that the meteor contains alien DNA that matches Pennywise's.

Jimmy jumps onto Goddard's back, and they fly up to the meteor. As they climb in altitude, Jimmy says, "Let's throw this meteor's trajectory off course for the Atlantic Ocean. That'll give Pennywise a wet surprise when it wakes up."

As the meteor draws closer, Jimmy mutters to himself the calculations for the mass and velocity of the falling rock. He points his finger and tries to determine the distance and impact trajectory. "Ah-ha," Jimmy says. He pulls out his hypercube and from it grabs the magnetic plates he used to stop the meteor that almost destroyed Retroville when Jimmy drained his brain. He points them at the

meteor, steadies his aim, and activates them. The waves pulse toward the meteor and shift its course of impact. Jimmy and Goddard watch as the meteor lands in the water with a thunderous splash.

"YES! Let's go home, boy!"

He flies with Goddard down to the time booth. They get in and make their way back to the present. They return in the same spot where they departed, only they arrive the morning of the day they left. Jimmy steps out of the time booth cautiously with Goddard.

"I sure hope it worked," Jimmy says. "That was our last resort."

He checks the time and finds that he needs to get ready for school.

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Jimmy walks into the halls of Lindbergh Elementary with a watchful eye. He immediately looks for Carl and Sheen, or at least what he hopes are Carl and Sheen. Walking over to his locker, he sees his best friends hanging outside their lockers talking about something that he hopes isn't sewer clowns.

"How many times do I have to tell you, Carl? It's impossible!" Sheen begins. Jimmy awaits in anticipation to see if they're going to mention Pennywise. "100 supercharged llamas, as ambitious as they might be, cannot defeat Ultra Lord!"

"But Sheen, you don't even know if Ultra Lord loves llamas or not. For all you know, he might be just as big a fan of them as I am. All it would take is one llama to do the job," Carl rebuts.

Jimmy lets out the biggest sigh of relief he has ever given.

"You seem pretty happy, Jimmy. Anything special happen?" Sheen asks.

"Nah...it's a long story," he tells them. "Let's go to class, fellas. I have a good feeling about today," Jimmy tells them.

The boys walk to class. When Jimmy enters, he looks around to find that Butch, Nick, and Libby are all in their seats. Not long after, the bell rings and Miss Fowl enters the classroom.

"BRAAwwwk, good morning, class! I'm going to begin taking ATTENdance." She begins calling students' names, and when Butch, Nick, and/or Libby's names are called, they all answer, and Jimmy's smile gets bigger with each confirmation from them.

After class, Jimmy and Carl are taken to the library by Sheen, who has something to show them.

"This way, fellas!" He leads them into a quiet corner in the back.

"Sheen, this had better not be some stupid Ultra Lord book again. Those are intended for first graders to teach them reading," Jimmy says.

"Nah, relax Jimmy! I already own every 'Ultra Lord Learns how to Read' book," he clarifies. "I want to show you my newest hobby!" He stops in the horror section.

"Wow, I didn't know there was a horror section," Carl says.

"You don't come here often, do you," Sheen asks. Carl shakes his head. Sheen grabs a book off the shelf titled *Werewolves From Mars*. He takes a look at the cover and reads the back. "This looks awesome! It's not too long a read, either!" Jimmy and Carl examine the various horror books. Carl reads the titles of each book, followed by disapproval of each one for different reasons. "Let's see... *Murderous Men from the 23rd Century*. Nuh-uh, that's gonna give me nightmares."

Jimmy, however, mocks a lot of the books. "These are ridiculous!"

*Murder in the Fourth Dimension.*

*Thing Fish.*

*It.*

Hey, wait a minute..." He takes a closer look at the cover of *It*. Something about it looks familiar. "Written by Stephen King..." Fear returns to his heart when he flips to the synopsis on the back cover. "It can't be..."



"Oh hey, it's *It*," Sheen says. "I'd read that if it wasn't over a thousand pages long!"

"You don't say? What's it about?" Jimmy reluctantly turns it over and begins reading the synopsis. "Let's see...Derry, Maine...evil sewer clown...band of losers...kids going missing?" his pupils shrink. "...based on true events..." He wanders away from Carl and Sheen with the book.

Quietly, he says, "Leapin' Leptons! I think I made a slliiight miscalculation about that meteor. I didn't throw it into the ocean...I threw it into Maine! How could this happen? I'll have to go back in time and...aw, forget it." He waves his hand.

"Hey Jimmy, what are you going on about to yourself," Sheen asks.

"Nothing! Just skimming through and remarking how dumb the synopsis for this novel is...Ha! A killer sewer clown! How ridiculous!"

"Uhhhh, I'm terrified of sewer clowns, Jimmy. That book would probably give me nightmares," Carl admits. They make their way for the front desk.

"Everything gives you nightmares," Sheen proclaims.

"I'm not terrified of sewer clowns," Jimmy tells them.

"They just annoy me, if anything."